

(Demo) Civilian Conservation Corps



FWSCCC-0059

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Malheur Refuge

OCTOBER NARRATIVE REPORT FOR CAMP FIVE MILE EF-1 OREGON

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Geo. W. Beers

CAMP FIVE MILE BF 1.

The month started off with closing out the records for Sod House Camp, BF 2 and being transferred to Camp Five Mile, BF1, which necessitated the check and transfer of property at each camp. A side camp of 17 men was established at Sod House, from Five Mile, in order that the buildings and fence jobs might continue; twenty five men were left at Five Mile.

On the 23d. of October, this side camp was pulled and a side camp established from Buena Vista on October 24; it was necessary to pull the boys that the Officer in charge might clean up his records, ready for their transfer to other camps. This was done on October 29; the boys left here at 9 p.m. to catch the train at Burns, some 70 miles distant, the foremen driving the trucks; trucks returned to camp at 4:25 a.m. after getting the boys and luggage on the train.

On the 30th. we left with 5 trucks for Board Corrals, Nevada, a distance of 105 miles across a semi-desert trail, commonly called a road. It took us 6 hours to travel this distance; the new company was moved to Five Mile on the 31st, arriving at 6 p.m. with 168 boys who understand how to work and what work means. These boys have been in CCC Camps from 6 months to 3 years; they are fast and willing workers.

Now for a little work description.

The 44 ton Osgood dragline at Camp Sod House, while excavating canals, suddenly settled and slipped to a 45 degree angle, burying itself up to the cab window on the rear side; the beaver and muskrat had undermined the canal bank just below the water level where it could not be seen, and when the heavy equipment reached this area which was nicely sodded over, it suddenly sank. After several days hard work digging out the mud and muck, and a 177 mile trip to borrow heavy line and blocks, we were able to pull out the dragline with the R D 7 cat and by using a deadman and a luff hitch with the blocks and line. The operator now goes wading in the streams, prospecting for beaver homes, before driving the dragline across.

The buildings at Sod House are being completed; the tile roof is on the clerk's residence and the furnace work is progressing quite rapidly; the pump house is nearly completed and the rock walls about the yards are taking on shape.

Cement for the P ranch basement and foundation was poured in one day; half the foundation, the half on the ground, is of cement while the top half is of rock; 25 boys and one foreman poured 50 yards.

Cement foundations for two cattle guards, 12x12', was poured; these cattleguards have a three foot pit with 2 center partitions; 18 3" iron pipes are used on top to make the tread, with surfaced 2x4s flatways used as spreaders; these pipe are loose, yet cannot come out by being driven over; they can be removed and the pit dug out, as they fill up with dust. The forms used for pouring the cement on these cattleguards, are portable.

Gravel was hauled from the west side canal of our dam in the Blitzen River above the P ranch, for surfacing the central road; the gravel had washed into this canal and prevented water turned into the canal from running; it was taken out by the dragline and loaded on trucks.

About 50 yds. of sand was hauled from the P ranch to Sod House, a distance of 43 miles, where it is used in building the rock walls between the headquarters buildings.

Ten loads of gate posts were hauled during October, 10 miles beyond Burns to the P ranch, a total distance of 75 miles; gates will be built at entrances to the Refuge. Four trucks hauled 2 days and 2 trucks one day.

One Sundayone of the CCC boys was on an exploring trip up the Blitzen River dam; he found a cave and after digging around in the cave, found the skeleton of an Indian, presumably a woman. One of the knees had been broken, but, apparently, had healed before death. The left hand had the thumb and forefinger intact, the fingernail being clearly indicated, while the middle and third fingers were off at the knuckles and the little finger at the first joint. The hand was badly withered, of course, the flesh and bone having become as fiber.

The fence on the east side of Malheur lake is completed, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles *of done* it. *this month closed the gap*

Speaking of the boys from the east not knowing the ways of the west has noting on an inspector working out of the Washington office. This individual, a very fine man, went to visit or interview a rancher, Mr. Joe Fine who lives in Catlow valley, 17 miles from Five Mile Camp; when the Inspector returned he stated "I did not get to see him as he was not receiving visitors today as the gate was shut". Well, he has since learned that gates in this country are to keep cattle and horses in or out, and not visitors!/

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The first ten days in October were spent on the dragline finishing the fill for the Center road down to its junction with the Five Mile road.

To obtain dirt for this fill we first removed the willows from the river bank; then with the dragline, the ragged irregular bank was cut to about a forty degree slope with the spoil built into a fill at the top of the slope. This was graveled and graded so now what was originally a rough winding road, choked with grass and brush, has become a beautiful straight level drive.

Driving down this road one gets a wonderful view of the valley from the "P" Ranch down to the Five Mile road. At this time of year the valley is dotted with hundreds of cattle and in their own fenced inclosures stand enormous stacks of hay. Occasionally a deer or coyote will stand and stare curiously at those who pass.

From this job the machine was moved to the dam. Two days were spent on the way digging two hundred yards of irrigation ditch about four feet wide and thirty inches deep. At the dam about two feet of gravel was removed from the head end of the west diversion ditch, this extended from the dam about four-hundred feet down the ditch.

Upon completing this job we started the river cut-off above the dam. This requires the removal of about seven thousand cubic yards of dirt. The machine will handle about fifty cubic yards per hour. This job is well under way and everything is going good.

On the last day of the month the oiler, an enrollee of Company 269, discovered a skunk in a trap near the dragline. Expressing much concern over the skunk's suffering, he asked if he might release it. Upon being informed that it was probably the humane thing to do he went back to the trap. In about an hour he returned. His coat he carried at the end of a long stick and with much disgust said "There's gratitude for you. I was just trying to help him and look what he did to me." Incidentally ye operator had to ride to camp with him in the cab of the truck.

Up until the middle of the month, a crew of twelve men shoveled an average of seventy-two cubic yds. of gravel per day. This gravel was hauled by from five to seven trucks to Center Road.

One "Cletrac" kept the gravel loose for men to load. This was a difficult job as the "Cletrac" was in poor condition. One man spread gravel on Center Road. This job has previously been done by three men and was a hard job for one man, but it was done well.

A crew of four men screened and washed sand which went to Sod House Camp for concrete and plastering purposes.

One crew of men worked for a short time at the "P" Ranch house---pouring cement, general carpentry and clean-up work. A crew of men also poured cement for two cattle guards. The new forms were used and they worked perfectly and a fine job was done on both guards.

Even with the boys knowing they were leaving this camp they did not lose interest but went right ahead with there work. Most of the boys felt badly about having to leave and would have liked to stay. Some of the boys had been in this camp as long as fourteen months and we lost a valuable lot of men when they were transferred.

There has been a great increase in bird life this month. There are several types of ducks and a few different types of geese in large bands. There are many blue heron, sandhill crane and pelicans have increased noticeably. Sage hen, quail, pheasant and other small game birds have become quite numerous. There are a few egret here.

Deer are seen in small bands quite frequently and some are becoming so gentle that they graze in the "P" Ranch orchard close to the house and other buildings. A few coyotes have been seen on the refuge during the past month.

During the month of October my work constituted various jobs. For several weeks I worked in the office and resident buildings helping put the furnaces together, and putting the heating ducts up.

Next, I was assigned the digging of ditches and pouring of cement for the rock walls around the buildings. I was given nine CCC boys for this work.

Just before I left Sod House Camp, with eleven CCC boys, we finished up a two mile stretch of fence on the lake bed.

I have now moved to Five Mile Camp which I think is even better than the Sod House Camp, it being a prettier place, and also warmer, with, as I have already found, many more birds and animals.

I have seen quite a number of Chinese pheasants, many species of hawks and owls, porcupines, ducks and geese, and this evening I saw a flock of eighteen Trumpeter Swans flying over the refuge. This is the largest number of wild swans I have ever seen together at one time.

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Work on the center road along the Blitzen canal went about the same as it did last month except that it went slower because we had so few men to work with.

We graded and surfaced with gravel about one-half mile of this road however there were fewer trucks used this month. We used the grader and the Cletrac "35" to grade and smooth about a mile of road crossing the valley between the center road and the state highway which runs along the west side of the valley. The Cletrac "35" powered with a Hercules motor is certainly a fine little job for light work. The Caterpillar RD-7 was used of course where the work was too heavy for the light "Cats". I believe the RD-7 to be one of the best machines of this type on the market being mobile and cheap to operate.

The "Speeder" dragline has finished sloping the Blitzen canal bank as far as the Dell Witzel place, completing about two miles of sloping.

All of the machines on the project are holding up fine, except the "55" Cletracs, doing a maximum amount of work with a very small loss of time for breakdowns.

Wildlife is getting more and more numerous as the shortage of feed forces the animals and birds down into the refuge for food.

Work on the "P" Ranch house this month have consisted mostly of cutting openings and getting ready to re-erect the building. Some time was spent in waterproofing the basement..

The new part have been erected and ready for shingling, work progressed slowly the latter part of the month due to the camp being moved.

By request of the engineer clamps were made for all gates at the dam so they could be locked. Braces were made to strengthen the lifting shaft on main gates.

All hand tools were kept in repair and repairs were made on the power pump. The dragline dipper was brought in and all of the worn parts were repaired.

The truck bodies were braced and repaired and bolts, fins and other repairs were made for all machines.

Several odd-sized wrenches were made for machines which were needed at once so as to keep the machines in operation.

After repairing on the trucks here at Five Mile, the camp to which I have been transferred I am finally getting them in shape although I haven't them all, I am slowly but surely succeeding.

I sure am glad of this as I have just gotten several other trucks from Board Corrals that are in bad condition.



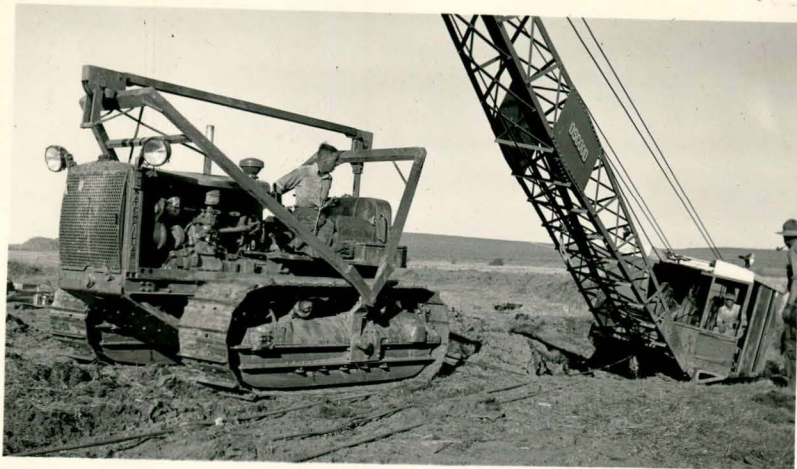
The 44 ton Osgood dragline mired down while excavating a canal in the Sod House field. This was caused by the beaver and muskrat undermining the grassy bank.



A closeup view of the dragline after some of the dirt and mud was removed, trying to get out by the aid of it's power plus the caterpillar, without line and blocks.



Picture after more mud had been removed, ready to try pulling with the cat and aided by block andline.



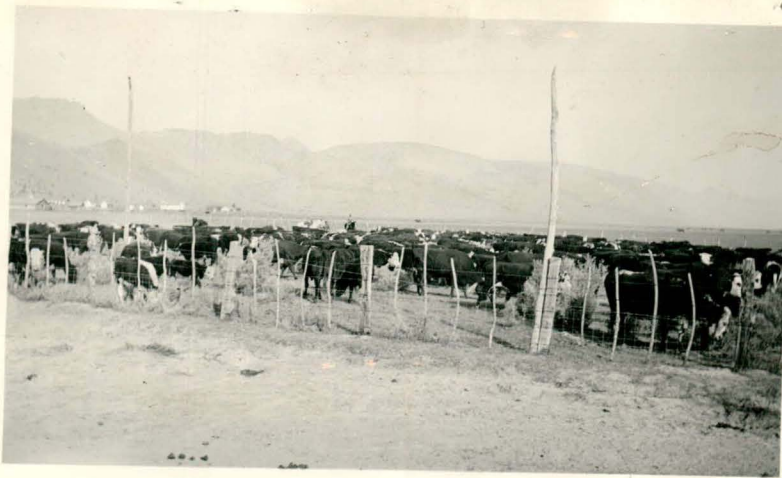
The Osgood dragline with the caterpillar hitched on to the line which is attached with a luff hitch to the dragline. It finally moved it.



The speeder dragline moving gravel from the west side canal just below the dam and headgate in the Blitzen River; the gravel was used for surfacing the center road.



Another picture of the speeder loading a truck with gravel taken from the canal.



Cattle which would be on the Refuge had the old fence around the Refuge not been repaired.



Loading sand out of the Blitzen River at the P ranch, ready to haul some 43 miles distant to Sod House, to be used in the rock walls about the headquarters buildings.



Pumping water out of the hole under the P ranch house ready to pour the cement basement.



Corner of the new fence around the Malheur lake, which had been torn down by someone; note that the boundary sign has been pulled up and set to one side.



Another place where the fence has been cut; note the posts in the background are only in the holes, ready to be set. It is obvious that whoever cut the fence here did it without apparent reason, as they could have gone a few rods and gone around the fence.



Yet another place where the fence is cut without apparent reason. A picture of yours truly shown holding the cut ends on the 5 wires.



Enrollee ripping up the road
with the R D 7 deisel cat.
When the road settles it will
settle evenly and not leave
ridges.



Boys removing the form from a
cattleguard they have poured.



A section of the center road
ready for the gravel.



Processing a section of the center
road, that is mixing clay with the
gravel.



Picture of the "P" Ranch house with
one section removed where the
basement is being constructed.